

# OUTWELL PARISH COUNCIL

## ANNUAL REPORT – FINANCIAL YEAR 1.4.2016 TO 31.3.2017

This Annual Report to Councillors and Parishioners is intended to summarise the Council's activities and to provide an insight into future planning. The Report is sub-divided under various headings – as follows: -

### (a) Council Meetings

Council meetings have been reasonably well attended by Parish Councillors. Since the Elections in May 2015 our District/Borough Councillor is Mr H Humphrey and Borough Councillor Mr. Chris Crofts. Both combine Borough Council duties with other elected posts. Both Councillors' have attended as many of our Parish Council meetings as possible. One member of Council has resigned Mr. Paul Smith, he was thanked for his time and work on the Council. Mr David Murfitt was co-opted on at the last meeting held in April. Attendance by parishioners has remained spasmodic, only on occasions, when issues affecting specific areas of the village are due for discussion, does the number attending rise above 1 or 2. Councillors continue to take this as a compliment, believing that most parishioners are content with the way in which the Council conducts its affairs.

### (b) Committees/Representatives on village committees

The eleven members of the Parish Council have specific responsibilities and report in detail at each Council Meeting.

**Councillor Tara Rust** represented the Council as the Liaison officer **with Beaupre Community Primary School**, she takes an active interest in school affairs providing a detailed report on the school's activities to Council Meetings. **Councillor's John Holland and Dale Boyce** report to the Council on **Cemetery** matters, the Parish Council providing the finance to keep the Cemetery clean and tidy. Here Council is again indebted to Mr and Mrs David Rayner for their devotion to keeping the grass cut and tidy and cutting back trees and hedges. **Councillor's Paul Brenchley, and Tara Rust** represents the Council on the **Playing Field and Village Hall Committee** and their monthly reports enable Councillors, who are all Trustees of the field, to keep abreast of the ongoing fund raising activities. **Councillors John Wake, Dale Boyce, John Watts, Mrs Jill Gooch and Mr Fred Keer** form our **Planning Sub Working Party**, tasked with examining every planning application received from the Borough Council, and making decisions and representations on all planning matters. They are empowered to make decisions in respect of many applications (small extensions, outline planning applications etc) to allow the Clerk to meet Borough Planning deadlines for reply, but bring any that may be controversial to the attention of the Full Council before recommendations or representations are made to the Borough Planning Authorities. **Councillors Peter Cutting and Dale Boyce**, form our **Allotment Sub-Working Party** overseeing allocation of tenancies and conducting an annual inspection. The parish is fortunate that all allotments are occupied. The Garden Allotments have now ceased due to lack of interest and location. **Councillors Paul Brenchley, John Holland and Alan Mould** form what is known as our **Village Committee**, they keep an eye out for any road defects, damaged road signs etc, and the general well being of the village. The Council employs a Village Handyperson to keep the village centre clean and our thanks go to Mr M D Ellington whom does small tasks when required and keeps the Council informed of any matters they need to know.

### d) The financial picture

As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 Council financial holdings were as follows :\_

Business Premium Account .....	£8,718.41
Community (Current) Account .....	£1,844.48
Petty Cash .....	£3.19
<b>Total :- .....</b>	<b>£10,566.08</b>

The end of year figures are lower than this time last year therefore the Precept for 2017/18 was raised the 10% allowed from the previous year to accommodate the projects proposed for this financial year. The Section 106 payment donated by Oceanview has now been spent. This money unfortunately lulled the Council into thinking there was plenty of money available therefore budgeting and looking at the forecast each month has been necessary. Council is grateful to **Councillor Fred Keer** for ensuring the reigns are kept tight now.

The Annual Precept for 2016-2017 was £11,500.00 an increase of £500.00 from previous year. There was a government grant allocated to the Parish of £1001.00. This assuring the parishioners that the finance committee with the guidance of the clerk continue to manage the finances efficiently. Parish Council annually pay £250.00 to Borough Council for the maintenance and upkeep of the Community Car Park at Townley Close Surgery, and energy costs that keep rising. The Council is grateful to Mr. Robert Smith who audited the books with great attention. This year the Council will most likely be asked questions regarding the 106 grant being spent on the Muga Pitch.

#### **e) Social Housing**

The Parish Council are still fighting to get the road adopted in both St. Andrew's Close and Birdbeck Road. This now is a problem with Hastoe Housing being given permission to build behind the existing estate on the premise they would pay for the road to be topped out ready for adoption but there are issues raised due to the fact the original developer hadn't put down the required lower base to be topped.

#### **f) Garden Allotments/Allotments**

The Garden Allotments have had various issues, and therefore are no longer available. Allotment tenants have been notified of a £10.00 per acre rise as from October 2017.

#### **g) LDF Site allocations development- Neighbourhood Plan**

This year, again the Borough Council has requested sites to be allocated for building and asked for Parish Council's input. They have in the past ignored sites that Parish Council feels are significant. Reason primarily being in a Flood Risk area of which Parish Council continually tries to prove otherwise that flooding can occur within the Parish. Now several areas have been put forward by local developers and land owners to gain permission to build on land that is considered potentially brown belt. Government have now bought in a new policy for self builds on Countryside. Outwell Parish Council are skirting around as to whether to have a Parish Plan or not. Upwell have already taken on this task. It depends on the costs that might be incurred and who wants to do the work for this.

#### **h) Outwell Parish Council WebSite**

This has become popular with visits. In turn the Council has been contacted in this manner and been informed of mistakes and old notices. Sadie Forth was very helpful in creating the Website to be attractive and informative and she has now trained the Clerk to keep it updated, to cut back on costs. It's a necessary part of the Transparency plan that every Town and Parish Council must have in place to publish their finances and assets. The link is [www.outwellparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.outwellparishcouncil.co.uk).

#### **i) Highway Issues.**

Parish Council has been working closely with NCC Highways to ensure that the School children are safe when leaving school i.e. safety with School Parking. Parish Council are continually battling to get safer crossing on the A1101. This is a very busy road of which both old and young need to use to get into the Village Centre and School. Parish Council have endeavoured to try and get a crossing of some sort near the Isle Bridge across from The Crown Public House to the other side. It will continue to lobby for some way of ensuring the traffic is made more aware that there is a crossing place. There was to be signage erected to try and get vehicle users to have a one - way system to and from the School when dropping off and picking children up, but unfortunately the wrong signs have been erected. There has been a barrier erected on the kerbside outside the entrance where the Children enter and depart from school. Another issue raised has been vehicles parked on the infilled canal and people selling them. Parish Council is liaising with NCC Highways and Waste Management as to how to stop this issue.

2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017..... Parish Clerk

NB. If the Parish Council approves this Report at the A.G.M. on 2.5.16 it is proposed that it is published on the WebSite.